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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/594,104	09/25/2006	Wouter De Graaff	2004.834US	7020
67706	7590	11/19/2008		
ORGANON USA, INC. c/o Schering-Plough Corporation 2000 Galloping Hill Road Mail Stop: K-6-1, 1990 Kenilworth, NJ 07033			EXAMINER DICKINSON, PAUL W	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1618	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			11/19/2008	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/594,104

Applicant(s)

DE GRAAFF ET AL.

Examiner

PAUL DICKINSON

Art Unit

1618

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 July 2008.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 and 13-19 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 and 13-19 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Applicant's arguments, filed 7/23/2008, have been fully considered but they are not deemed to be persuasive. Rejections and/or objections not reiterated from previous office actions are hereby withdrawn. The following rejections and/or objects are either reiterated or newly applied. They constitute the complete set presently being applied to the instant application.

Response to Arguments

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The rejection of Claims 1-11 and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 0876815 (EP '815) is maintained.

Applicant argues that the drug delivery system disclosed by EP '815 does not disclose a concentration of a progestogenic compound below the saturation level at 25 °C. In contrast, EP '815 teaches a relatively low degree of supersaturation. While Claim 4 of EP '814 teaches a concentration of about one but not more than about 6 times the saturation level, the reference as a whole teaches that supersaturation means that the progestogenic compound is present in a concentration of at least the saturation level, and does not include values below the saturation level.

Applicants arguments have been fully considered but are not found persuasive. A reference may be relied on for all it teaches, and is not limited by preferred embodiments or examples. EP '815 clearly teaches embodiments wherein the concentration of the progestogenic compound is about one times the saturation level,

and further teaches the importance of keeping the compound dissolved in a low concentration to improve the shelf life. The skilled practitioner would instantly envision values at or just under the saturation level to afford a product with a prolonged shelf life. The teaching of EP '815 meets every limitation of the instant claims.

New Grounds of Rejection

Claim Objections

Claims 17-19 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim, as evidenced by van Laarhoven et al 2002a (van Laarhoven et al, Effect of supersaturation and crystallization phenomena on the release properties of a controlled release device based on EVA copolymer, Journal of Controlled Release, 2002, 82, 309-317). van Laarhoven et al 2002a discloses that the saturation level at 25 °C of etonogestrel is 0.35 wt% (see Section 3.3). Claims 17-19 depend indirectly from Claim 1, which requires the concentration of the progestogenic compound to be up to a concentration below the saturation level at 25 °C (i.e. values up to below 0.35 wt%). However, Claims 17, 18, and 19 broaden the claimed range to values between 0.1 and 1.0 wt%, between 0.3 and 0.8 wt%, and 0.4 to 0.7 wt%, respectively. Thus, Claims 17-19 expand the claimed range and fail to further limit the base claim.

Applicant is required to cancel the claims, or amend the claims to place the claims in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claims in independent form.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 17 recites "between 0.1 and 1.0 wt%". It is unclear what this percentage is relative to (i.e. the weight of the core, the weight of the entire drug delivery system, the weight of etonogestrel at 100% saturation, etc).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 17-19 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by van Laarhoven et al 2002b (van Laarhoven et al, In vitro release properties of etonogestrel and ethinyl estradiol from a contraceptive vaginal ring, International Journal of

Pharmaceutics, 2002, 232, 163-173). van Laarhoven et al 2002b discloses a drug delivery system consisting of one compartment, the compartment comprising (i) a core of a thermoplastic polyethylene vinylacetate copolymer comprising etonogestrel, the etonogestrel being dissolved in the polyethylene vinylacetate copolymer at 0.25, 0.3, 0.55, 0.7, and 0.75wt% and (ii) a skin of a thermoplastic polyethylene vinylacetate copolymer covering the core, the skin being permeable for both compounds (see Materials and Methods; Figure 4).

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to PAUL DICKINSON whose telephone number is (571)270-3499. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 9:00am-6:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Hartley can be reached on 571-272-0616. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Michael G. Hartley/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1618

Paul Dickinson
Examiner
AU 1618

October 23, 2008